

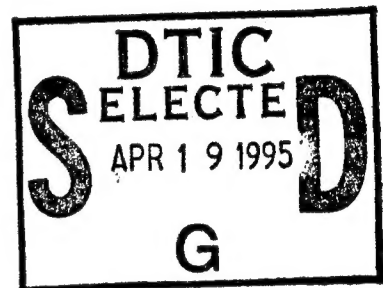
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, RI

THE U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND AND THE ANDEAN DRUG WAR

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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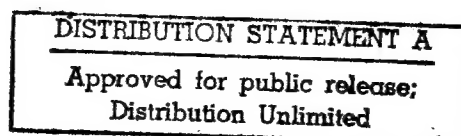
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DOD	United States Department of Defense
DOS	United States Department of State
FARC	Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FMFP	Foreign Military Financing Program
GAO	United States General Accounting Office
IMET	International Military Education and Training
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
MAAG	Military Assistance and Advisory Group
M-19	19th of April Movement
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MAS	"Death to Kidnappers" (Muerte a Secuestradores) cartel organization
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
MRTA	Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement
NIDA	National Institute of Drug Abuse
SAO	Security Assistance Officer
TAD	Temporary Additional Duty

USC	U.S. Code
USCINCSOUTH	U.S. Commander-in-Chief South
USIA	U.S. Information Agency
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USSOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command

ABSTRACT

As the operational commander for the region responsible for production of virtually all the cocaine imported into the United States, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Southern Command provides the military response at the operational level for what is widely referred to as "America's war on drugs." The focus for these efforts, which in reality is a Military Operation Other Than War, is the Andean Ridge region of South America, and in particular the countries of Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru. Of the three traditional methods of attacking the "supply" side of narcotrafficking -- interdiction, crop eradication/substitution, and security assistance -- only security assistance operations are viable within a host nation. Several stringent constraints are placed on how USCINCSOUTH conducts these operations. The most serious of these are the requirements for the host government's support, cooperation, and own efforts. The host governments face competing problems narcotics trafficking, political insurgencies, and terrorism. While current U.S. strategy recognizes the need to address these competing problems, host nation militaries are unwilling or unable to focus on these problems simultaneously. Counter-narcotics activities invariably receive the lowest priority. A recommendation is made to reduce host nation support and to refocus those efforts into U.S. domestic demand reduction programs.

CHAPTER 1

FRAMEWORK

The U.S. military's involvement in what political rhetoric refers to as "America's war on drugs" is in fact a Military Operation Other than War (MOOTW). Outside the confines of the United States, the U.S. military has been charged with significant responsibilities in conducting these operations, particularly in the Central and South American areas of operations. The operational commander in this region is USCINCSOUTH. Responsibility falls to this commander for conducting efforts to curb the influx of narcotics, particularly cocaine, at their source. Significant constraints are placed on a limited number of avenues available to pursue an equally small number of operational objectives. This makes for an extraordinary challenge.

The first U.S. antidrug operation in the Latin American region can be traced to Operation Intercept launched by President Richard Nixon in 1969. This operation also marked the first contentious engagement between the United States and a Latin American country -- in this case, Mexico. Having vowed to fight crime and permissiveness during the 1968 presidential campaign, the newly elected president ordered the U.S. Customs Service to shut down the flow of illicit goods from Mexico at the U.S.-Mexican border. This was to prevent the U.S.-Mexican border from being used as a marijuana transshipment point. The unilateral action on the part of the United States outraged Mexico. Crops rotted waiting for clearance to continue north. U.S. tourism in Mexico

dropped by seventy percent. The outcome in terms of interdiction, however, was minimal. When Mexico successfully pressured the United States to halt the operation, smugglers, who went dormant at the first word of the U.S. initiative, simply went on with business as usual.¹ This unfortunate experience set the pattern for much of U.S. and Latin American anti-drug initiatives, a pattern marked by U.S. unilateral action, foreign government resentment of U.S. dictation, and inconsequential results.

The Problem

Virtually all cocaine coming into the United States comes from coca grown in the Andean countries of Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia. Peru grows sixty percent of the illicit crop. Bolivia contributes thirty percent and Colombia grows ten percent. While the percentage of coca grown in Colombia is relatively small, Colombia serves as the processing and shipping center for nearly all the cocaine destined for the United States. Fully eighty percent of cocaine reaching the U.S. was processed in and shipped from Colombia.²

This production is highly lucrative.³ In 1987, the amount of coca leaves required to make one kilogram of cocaine cost between \$500 and \$750. The undiluted cocaine produced from leaves sold for between \$160,000 and \$240,000. Without taking into

¹ Merrill Collett, *The Cocaine Connection; Drug Trafficking and Inter-American Relations*, Headline Series, (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1989), 21.

² Ibid., 62.

³ It is common lore that the illegal drug business was born in Colombia when a U.S. sailor on liberty approached a boy to obtain marijuana. The boy produced a bagful and when the sailor asked how much the boy responded, "Fifty," meaning 50 Colombian pesos. The sailor misunderstood and gave the boy fifty U.S. dollars -- an incredible sum.

account "cutting" the cocaine to produce a greater amount of diluted product, this gave a profit margin from farm to street of nearly four hundred percent.⁴

Finger Pointing

Much of the historical difficulty in relations between South American and the U.S. over drug interdiction resulted from the definition of the cause of the traffic. The U.S. has historically viewed the problem as coming from abroad, as a "source" or "supply" problem. The "malignancy" of drug use did not arise from an economic "cause and effect" relationship of a supply meeting a demand. Rather, it stemmed from the flood of a "perverse" product that can be made cheaply, sold at a tremendous profit, and is "insidiously" habit-forming. The drug trade does represent a concrete benefit to the Andean region in many ways. Estimates of cocaine-based national revenues for the Andean countries range from a low of \$500 million to up to \$4 billion. It has further been estimated that as many as 1.5 million people are directly employed by coca production and distribution in the Andean region.⁵ U.S. policy-makers have traditionally dealt with illicit drugs by trying to stop the flow at its source. Thus, the U.S. illicit drug effort has emphasized the "supply" side of the equation.

This supply-oriented approach gave the United States the luxury of using a stand-off strategy: the battle was waged on other shores; the concomitant problems of potential narcoterrorism, corruption of government officials, and political instability were conveniently avoided. The Andean nations, however, viewed the problem from the

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Peter H. Smith, ed. *Drug Policy in the Americas*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 10.
Tom Margenthal, "A Mission to Nowhere," *Newsweek* (February 19, 1990): 33.

opposite perspective. They saw narcotics trafficking as being extremely serious for their countries, bringing to them the problems the United States was avoiding. Further, the situation was precipitated by the unchecked demand for illicit drugs in the United States. Faced with stringent demands to eliminate illicit drugs at the source, they felt they had been thrown on the front lines of a war of the United States' making without the necessary resources, equipment, or training.

Competitors for Attention

Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia faced a combination of many interrelated wars. They wage war not only against narcotraffickers, but also against narcoterrorists and political insurgents with links to the drug trade from both the far-left as well as the far-right.

Effective anti-drug efforts were often constrained by the crippling effects of narcoterrorism. Presidential candidates, judges, and other openly anti-drug officials have been murdered with frightening regularity. This type of harsh reprisal often extends to the relatives of political and judicial officials. For example, days before his meeting with President Bush at the White House on 26 February 1991, narcoterrorists killed the cousin of Colombia's President Gavira.⁶

Drug-related insurgency adds to the pressure. In Colombia, the most famous and powerful insurgent groups are FARC and M-19. Peru must contend with the Shining Path (Sendero Luminosa) and MRTA. Many drug-backed organizations within a single country frequently work together. What is particularly troubling for the Andean nations is

⁶ Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, *Dispatch*. 2 (March 4, 1991) ([Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1991): 154.

that many revolutionary groups work closely with the drug cartels. This connection was first exposed in a raid on a complex of drug laboratories in Tranquilandia, Colombia, in March 1984. Along with 12,400 kilograms of cocaine (valued at \$1.2 billion) were 100 FARC guerrillas protecting the facility and the 40-60 cartel personnel working there. These guerrillas were armed with weapons from Cuba.⁷

The narcotrafficker-guerrilla relation can be ephemeral and open to interpretation, however. In 1981, after M-19 guerrillas kidnapped and held for ransom the daughter of drug kingpin Jorge Luis Ochoa, Ochoa was successful in petitioning other drug leaders to contribute \$7.5 million to form an organization known as "Death to Kidnappers" (MAS).⁸ Beside illustrating the possibly contentious connection between some guerrilla organizations and drug traffickers, this gathering of drug traffickers to form MAS also marked the inception of the Medellin drug cartel.

The narco-guerrilla connection is viewed skeptically by some who consider more dangerous the relationship between the cartels and the right-wing para-military, including (in some instances) the military forces themselves.⁹ Continuing on the previous example, MAS was formed with the collaboration of the Colombian army, thus providing the gestation of one of the strongest and most powerful drug cartels in the world.¹⁰

Whether it is against left-wing guerrillas or right-wing paramilitary organizations, the burden of battling all these groups falls usually to the Andean countries' military and not their police forces. The drug war is viewed by the Andean military as a relatively

⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁸ Bruce M. Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs," *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1988): 76.

⁹ Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, *Andean Drug Strategy*. (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1991), 11.

¹⁰ Peter Dale Scott, and Jonathan Marshall, *Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies, and the CIA in Central America* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1991), 89.

recent phenomenon when compared with its thirty year-plus counterinsurgency battle. It is also one they see as having a low priority. In 1990, Colombia, for example, spent \$40.2 million in U.S. counternarcotics military aid in a region not known for drug trafficking but was infamous for insurgency operations.¹¹ As a further example, reports indicated discrepancies between quantities of U.S. military assistance provided and quantities on hand in the region for items such as 9mm ammunition, troop equipment items, and components for mortar weapons systems. A GAO audit drew the conclusion the missing items probably ended up in the counterinsurgency effort.¹²

If the USSOUTHCOM is to be successful in its counternarcotics efforts in South America, it must respond to the full spectrum of South American concerns. Simultaneously, USSOUTHCOM must assure any additional efforts centered on addressing these other concerns are not siphoned off from USSOUTHCOM's current primary operational objective of eliminating narcotrafficking from within the region.

¹¹ Lieutenant Colonel Richard F. Riccarelli, US Army, "Waging Limited War on Drugs: New Strategy for the Nineties" *Military Review*, October 1994, p.28.

¹² General Accounting Office. *The Drug War: Observations on Counternarcotics Aid to Colombia*, Report to Congress, Washington D.C., 1991.

CHAPTER 2

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

Counterdrug operations are at the lowest end of the range of military operations, falling into the peacetime, noncombatant level of MOOTW.¹ Five imperatives must be considered when planning and conducting MOOTW.² These are political dominance, unity of effort, adaptability, legitimacy, and perseverance. In the past all five have been left wanting in the military planning process for South American counterdrug operations. In recent counterdrug activities between the U.S. and Andean countries, however, political dominance and unity of effort have been consciously addressed. In sequencing these actions, political objectives must be agreed upon *before* unity of effort can be established. This is a critical consideration in all areas of warfare but it has become of special significance in counternarcotics efforts in the source regions of South America.

U.S. National Strategy

The most current chapter in the saga of the war on drugs can be traced to the death of basketball star Len Bias of a cocaine overdose in 1986.³ As a culmination of

¹ Headquarters, Departments of the Army and the Air Force, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*. Field Manual 100-20, Air Force Pamphlet 3-20 (Washington: 5 December 1990). p. 2-1.

² FM 100-20, cited above uses the term "Low Intensity Conflict (LIC)." MOOTW has superseded this term.

³ Bruce Michael Bagley, "The New Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America." *Journal of Latin American Studies and World Affairs* 30 (Spring 1988): 165.

political reaction to this highly publicized case, the U.S. Congress passed, and President Reagan signed into law, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. This act was novel in at least one major area: it provided for a two-front war, looking at both supply and demand. This new, more balanced approach to the problem of narcotics in the United States had a major, positive impact on the level of cooperation and coordination and the resultant unity of effort between the U.S. and Latin America. The Andean Strategy was derived from this close cooperation.

The Andean Strategy

If a cooperative atmosphere was to be fostered between the producer nations in the Andean region and the primary consumer nation, the United States, it was up to the United States to address the South American issues. These issues included economic and political stability, counterterrorism, as well as those surrounding narcotics. They were complex and often interrelated. The United States made its first large move towards recognizing these concerns through the 1989 National Drug Control Strategy. As might be expected, it called for

. . . military and other assistance to cocaine-producing
and transit countries to isolate major coca-growing areas,
block delivery of chemicals used for cocaine processing,
[and] destroy cocaine transit areas . . .⁴

But, and most important from the South American perspective, it further recognized that cocaine trafficking was *only one* threat in the Andean region. Economic instability and political insurgencies were of equal and related concern.

Economic instability and political insurgencies also present
serious challenges to democratic institutions and stability in

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George Bush, 1989 National Drug Control Strategy (The White House, 1989), 106.

the area. The three are interrelated; addressing one without also addressing the others is unlikely to achieve reduced cocaine supply.⁵

This acknowledgment of the complexity of the Andean situation was eagerly welcomed by the Colombians, Bolivians, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the Peruvians. They viewed it as a sign that the U.S. was willing to view the drug problem in terms that extended beyond U.S. borders, ending a self-centered, myopic interpretation of what was in their view a hemispheric problem.

The strategy devised between the U.S. and the Andean nations noted that to strengthen regional support for these objectives the U.S. needed to intensify cooperation with the governments of the coca-producing countries and to convene an Andean drug summit within the next year.⁶

This happened. The Cartagena Summit was held in February 1990. The "Cartagena Agreement" resulted and was signed by the presidents of the United States, Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru. It called for an intensive and comprehensive anti-narcotics strategy for stopping the production, distribution, as well as the consumption of illicit drugs. It acknowledged the need to share information and intelligence. It promised development of alternative agricultural schema such as crop substitution. It recognized the need to target demand reduction in consumer countries. Its producer country program was based on increased law enforcement and interdiction efforts, economic development, and crop substitution.⁷

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Ibid. , 63.

⁶

Ibid. , 62

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Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. *The Andean Initiative*. (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1991), App 2.

The United States' "Andean Strategy" that evolved from the Cartagena agreement was the first comprehensive attempt to address all areas of cocaine production and distribution. It listed four main objectives:

- ♦ Strengthen the political commitment and institutional capability of the government to take the steps necessary to disrupt drug-trafficking activities and organizations.
- ♦ Increase the effectiveness of law enforcement and security activities against drug-trafficking activities, particularly in remote and inaccessible areas in which these activities occur.
- ♦ Inflict significant damage on the trafficking organizations by disrupting operations, including focusing on trafficking leaders and their key lieutenants, and taking actions such as impeding the transfer of drug-generated funds, and seizing and forfeiting drug assets within the United States and other countries.
- ♦ Strengthen and diversify the legitimate economy to enable the country to overcome the destabilizing effects of illegal drugs as a major source of income.⁸

The first three objectives were original, written in 1990. The fourth was added in 1991.⁹

The U.S. committed to providing law enforcement and military assistance, training and technical assistance, equipment including hardware, vehicles, and communications gear. Further, the U.S. agreed to balance-of-payments assistance, supporting income-earning alternatives to coca-growing, and support of trade and investment programs. This economic support was to be conditioned on drug control performance as well as a country's adherence to "sound economic policies, and human rights respect." Legislation was promised for an expansion of trade in legal products.

⁸ General Accounting Office. *Drug War: Colombia Is Undertaking Antidrug Programs, but Impact is Uncertain*, (Washington, DC, August, 1993), 11.

⁹ George Bush, *1991 National Drug Control Strategy* (The White House, 1991), 79.

While the current Clinton administration has turned its focus towards a domestic, consumer-oriented strategy, for the most part its international objectives and strategies are a direct continuation of this Andean strategy.

Whether emphasizing the supply side or the demand side, one thing remains clear: as long as drug trafficking remains profitable, it will continue. Only if the market dries up or if the cost of supplying that market rises to an intolerable level will the profit incentive disappear, and, along with it, drug production and distribution.

USSOUTHCOM Strategy

Outside the United States, the National Drug Control Strategy continues to attack the supply side of the equation. Military assistance is key to U.S. involvement. Primary methods, as outlined in the Andean strategy, are crop eradication and substitution, along with continued interdiction of those drugs that continue to be produced. As the unified command in charge of military responses in the region, it is the U.S. Southern Command that faces the onerous task of translating this national strategy into an operational-level response to it.

USSOUTHCOM Organization

Headquartered in Quarry Heights, Panama, USSOUTHCOM's primary elements consist of an Army light infantry brigade, an Army aviation brigade, a Navy special warfare unit and special boat unit, an Army landing craft mechanized boat company, military/security police, and Army combat engineer, medical, and signal battalions.

USSOUTHCOM's components consist of U.S. Army South, U.S. Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, U.S. Maritime Forces Atlantic, U.S. Special Operations Command South, U.S. Southern Air Forces, Joint Task Force Bravo in Honduras, and the region's Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAGs) located in the sixteen embassies in South and Central America.

Military forces assigned in theater to USSOUTHCOM number approximately 10,000. An additional 1,200 assigned to Joint Task Force Bravo rotate in and out of theater on a temporary (TAD) basis. Another one hundred military personnel are attached to the embassy Security Assistance Offices. USSOUTHCOM further makes extensive demands on reserve component forces to provide a bulk of their training and exercise personnel requirements.¹⁰

Constraints on USSOUTHCOM

USSOUTHCOM recognizes the multi-faceted nature of the drug problem. While it sees the counterdrug effort as its current primary mission area, it also focuses on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.

Unlike "normal" combatant operations, the pursuit of these missions is complicated by stringent constraints on how they go about their attempts to attack the problem. The first of these are those limitations placed on the U.S. military by the Posse Comitatus Act of 1871. This law, passed in 1878, prohibited the military from becoming directly or actively involved with enforcing civil laws. In 1981, a change to Title 10, U.S. Code reduced some of the Posse Comitatus restrictions.¹¹ New, slightly more lenient

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U.S. Naval War College, *USSOUTHCOM*, (Newport, RI: n.d.), p.6.

stipulations were placed on how the U.S. military other than the U.S. Coast Guard (which, through 14 USC 89a, is directly charged with law enforcement duties) may conduct operations against drug activity. Based upon the revised law, the Department of Defense developed provisions that allowed loaning of people and equipment and direct operation of equipment involved in detection and monitoring of air and sea traffic.¹² Still, the overall intent of restricting the use of the U.S. military forces in law enforcement remained.

Another restriction on USSOUTHCOM activity is that their efforts must be invited by the host nation through the U.S. ambassador who, through the use of the embassy Country Team, controls and limits that activity. While USSOUTHCOM does participate in interagency coordination, it is the Country Team that serves as the general clearing house and coordination center for U.S. interagency efforts within a host country. USSOUTHCOM, through its MAAGs, is a subordinate entity in this process.

Lastly and perhaps most severely, the U.S. military is not authorized to participate directly in host nation counterdrug operations whether invited or not. U.S. military personnel are restricted from accompanying host nation personnel on operations.¹³

Such restrictions are proper. Yet, constraints on the use of U.S. military force must be taken into account when considering USSOUTHCOM's possible operations and their efficacy.

¹¹ Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Wade, Jr., "The Military's Role in Drug Interdiction is Headed for Failure." (Maxwell Airforce Base, AL: Air University, 1989), p. 9

¹² Lieutenant Colonel Bruce R. Sutherland, "A Southern Command Military Campaign against Drug Operations". (Maxwell Airforce Base, AL: Air University, 1989), p. 12.

¹³ U.S. Naval War College, p.4.

Theater Coordination

While acting as a possible constraint on USSOUTHCOM efforts, it is the U.S. Country Team that serves as an overall focus for translating U.S. strategic goals into operational initiatives. Entities that have counternarcotics interests that typically serve on the country team include the SAO, the DEA agent-in-charge, the INS attaché, Customs Attaché, the Narcotics Assist Unit for DOS, the FBI Legal Attaché, a representative from USAID, USIA and the Defense Attaché. Each of these members represents and communicates with their parent organs in the United States. Again, it is through the subordinate MAAGs that USSOUTHCOM is represented on the Country Team.¹⁴

USSOUTHCOM Efforts

USSOUTHCOM applies relevant restrictions and conducts counternarcotics efforts by working through the U.S. embassies to support host nation efforts. In broad terms, the command does so through training, operational support, equipment, advice, and technological and maintenance support. The command further supports the host nation's efforts with surveillance information. USSOUTHCOM's efforts in assisting Andean nations' operations can be broken down into three general areas: interdiction, crop eradication and substitution, and security assistance.

Interdiction

For the U.S. military, interdiction normally means operations conducted outside a host nation. It does not normally rely on host nation support. This scheme was the

¹⁴ Murl D. Munger and William W. Mendel, *Campaign Planning and the Drug War*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1991), p. 45

historical emphasis for U.S. non-domestic counternarcotics efforts. It is generally believed to have been only marginally successful. Current estimates show an estimated 500 to 700 tons of cocaine are produced annually. It only takes thirteen tractor-trailer loads to meet United States annual demand for cocaine.¹⁵ Clearly, it doesn't take many smuggling successes to defeat interdiction efforts. DOD serves as the lead agency for detection and monitoring of illicit narcotics flow towards the United States. USSOUTHCOM has responsibilities in this venue. But since interdiction begins once drugs depart the manufacturing/transshipment country, interdiction operations are outside the area of consideration and won't receive further mention here. Interdiction internal to a host nation falls under the next two topics.

Crop Eradication/Substitution

There is a growing consensus that crop eradication and substitution programs will fail. The cocaine producing areas are remote, lacking road networks or other infrastructure including water and electricity services. Substitution of an economically and agriculturally viable crop is problematic. The soil is generally poor to the point that normal cash crops are not sustainable. The profit margins cited earlier are impossible to match with a legitimate cash crop.

Further, crop eradication and substitution programs tie in closely with insurgency efforts. A former Peruvian commander stated, "There are 150,000 campesinos cocaleros [peasant cocaine farmers] in the zone. Each of them is a potential subservio [insurgent]. Eradicate his field and the next day he'll be one."¹⁶

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Stephen Flynn, "Worldwide Drug Scourge, The Response," *The Brookings Review* (Spring, 1993), 38.
ibid.

Eradication efforts are not sustainable. The best example of this was Operation Blast Furnace, a joint eradication effort between the United States and Bolivia conducted in 1986. This effort was successful only while U.S. forces were present in theater. During the four-month deployment of four U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopters in the Beni region of Bolivia, no coca was bought, no coca paste was processed, and no cocaine was shipped from the region. However, as soon as the U.S. units departed, the traffickers (who had been waiting out the operation) recommenced their operations.¹⁷

Most importantly, eradication efforts are entirely dependent upon host government cooperation. Economic and political pressures make such an effort difficult for a host government to support. As stated earlier, there is an economic benefit to a host nation from illicit narcotics trade. At least equally important are the clandestine pressures placed on the government by the traffickers themselves through corruption or intimidation. Given internal pressures, both legitimate and illegitimate, it is unlikely that significant, sustained eradication efforts can be mounted.

Security Assistance

Security assistance is defined by USSOUTHCOM as the means by which the U.S. supplements its own defense posture by assisting its allies in acquiring, maintaining, and if necessary, employing self-defense.¹⁸ It is the primary method at USSOUTHCOM's disposal to fight counternarcotics. Three programs serve as USSOUTHCOM's primary tools for implementing the Security Assistance program. These are: 1) the Military Assistance Program (MAP); 2) its follow-on, the Foreign Military Financing Program

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Peter H. Smith, ed. *Drug Policy in the Americas*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 119.
ibid, p.32.

(FMFP); and 3) the International Military Education and Training Fund (IMET). The first two are congressionally appropriated grant aid and loan funding programs that assist foreign governments in purchasing U.S. military equipment. IMET uses small mobile training teams as well as courses offered by the U.S. Naval Small Craft and Technical Instruction Training School in Panama. It has been specifically used to train for counterinsurgent and counterterrorist operations.¹⁹ In 1993 alone, the United States provided \$478 million to the Andean nations in security assistance programs. While significant, this pales in comparison to the estimated cocaine industry's annual revenues of \$300 billion.²⁰

The Baseline

Statistics on cocaine demand in the U.S. show generally favorable trends towards a decrease in its use. According to a survey, cocaine use reported "within the last month" declined from an average of 2.9 percent in 1985 to 0.8 percent in 1990. The overall trend from 1975 to 1990 showed cocaine use rising from approximately two percent to a peak of over six percent in 1985 before falling to the 0.8 percent figure in 1990.²¹ Any success in controlling cocaine in the source countries must be demonstrably above an already occurring favorable trend in the decline of demand.

These figures may be misleading, though. Provided by the NIDA Household Survey, they dealt only with U.S. households, thereby missing the homeless, destitute,

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ibid, p.33.

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Lieutenant Colonel Richard F. Riccarelli, US Army, "Waging Limited War on Drugs: New Strategy for the Nineties."

²¹ *Military Review*, October 1994, p.27.

Smith, 4.

prison populations, college dormitories, and those other facets of society outside the home that are most likely to use illicit drugs. In support of the validity of the downward trend, however, is the large number of people reporting themselves as *former* drug users.²²

Any comfort taken by these favorable trends was mitigated by the increase in coca leaf production. Between 1987 and 1990, coca leaf production in the Andean nations rose from 290,700 to 310,000 metric tons.²³ Clearly, a reduction in supply wasn't responsible for any decrease in demand.

The Objectives

No goals have been established to gauge Andean interdiction efforts. Host nation efforts were to be certified under the provisions of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. The president provides the Congress certification of a host government's efforts to suppress illicit drug production, trafficking, and money laundering, as well as their full cooperation with U.S. counternarcotics initiatives.²⁴ But there have been no quantifiable goals, targets, or objectives established for Andean *in-country interdiction* efforts.

The 1989 National Drug Control Strategy did establish general U.S. goals along many dimensions. The primary heading that could be used to assess success or failure of the Andean initiative is "drug availability." The definition of drug availability and its importance were described as follows:

Our two best indicators of drug availability are: first, estimated amounts of foreign-manufactured drugs currently entering the United States; and second, reports by survey respondents concerning the ease with which drugs may be obtained in their communities. Reduced availability can have an important, beneficial effect on drug demand.²⁵

²² Ibid., 6.

²³ Ibid., 8.

²⁴ George Bush, *1989 National Drug Control Strategy* The White House: 1989), 68.

Two- and ten-year objectives were laid out in 1989. The two-year objectives were broken down into the two topics related to the definitions described above: first, a ten percent reduction in estimated amounts of cocaine entering the United States; and second, a ten percent reduction in the number of people reporting that cocaine was easy to obtain in their communities. These figures were to be provided by the NIDA Household Survey. In the 1990 National Drug Control Strategy, these two objectives were increased to fifteen percent each. In 1991, and thereafter, objectives were no longer listed or referred to in any of the drug control strategy reports. Without any identified national objectives, it is difficult to gauge USSOUTHCOM's operational successes in in-country interdiction efforts today.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States' efforts external to domestic policy focus on a three-prong attack on narcotics: interdiction, eradication/substitution, and security assistance programs. Thus far, interdiction has proven to be only marginally effective, if at all. Crop eradication and substitution is proving to be a fatally flawed strategy. It is too hard to sustain and places impossible requirements on host government support. Security assistance appears to be the only viable operation open to USSOUTHCOM. However, by its very nature, security assistance is dependent on the reception of the host government.

Without host nation support, and particularly a host nation's sustained military support, any efforts by the U.S. military to aim security assistance towards the Andean drug war cannot succeed. Andean military organizations are often unable or unwilling to shift their focus from their counterinsurgency problem to the counternarcotics war. U.S. oversight on which efforts are conducted using U.S. funds is lax. Mathea Falco, former head of the State Department's narcotics office, commenting on the presidential certification of host nations efforts, stated, "The whole certification process is a joke."¹ The only nations that have been decertified for failing to meet counter-narcotics requirements are Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, and Panama,² nations whose lack of cooperation cannot be described as surprising. This lack of vigor in the certification process continues today. It is clear that resources provided by the United States for counternarcotics

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Jonathan Marshall, *Drug Wars*. (Forestville: Cohan & Cohan Publishers, 1991), 11.

²

Bruce Michael Bagley, "The New Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America." *Journal of Latin American Studies and World Affairs* 30 (Spring 1988): 169.

operations are being diverted to sustain other wars against guerrillas and paramilitary forces in the Andes.

Further complicating the political picture, the specter of human rights violations has loomed over U.S.-supported forces in the Andean region.³ As well, shifting Andean military efforts to the drug war opened up far greater temptations to corruption by narcotraffickers to all levels of military leadership.

U.S. thinking seems to have focused on two alternatives. The first is to "push" or intensify efforts in the Andean region. To ensure South American unity of effort and perseverance, this most probably would require the United States to take a more deliberate stance towards this area's continuing counterinsurgency efforts. Such a stance raises difficult political questions that must be addressed above the level of an operational commander.

The second alternative is to "pull out;" that is, divorce the U.S. of the South American theater efforts, and devote U.S. energy and resources to a domestic program aimed at eliminating demand. A review of the funding for security assistance programs earmarked for counternarcotics efforts in South America seems appropriate, as does a critical review of the certification process for Andean interdiction. Given the difficulty the USSOUTHCOM faces in attempting to guarantee proper targeting of aid to Andean military organizations, perhaps these funds would best serve U.S. national interests by supporting programs aimed at reducing demand inside the United States. Security assistance provided by USSOUTHCOM to the Andean nations would then follow more traditional defensive roles. In the "push and pull" between engagement and abandonment, a U.S. official described the Andean strategy by stating it "had a foot on every

³ General Accounting Office. *Drug War: Colombia Is Undertaking Antidrug Programs, but Impact is Uncertain*, (Washington, DC, August, 1993). 43.

base," indicating it looked at every component of counter-narcotics. The United States might be best served by planting both feet firmly on home plate.

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